



## Developing a Bird-Glass Collision Monitoring Program

### Designing and Organizing Carcass Search Program

Ideally glass areas will be searched throughout the year for bird collisions. However, spring and fall bird migrations are the most critical time periods for collision monitoring. April, May, September, and October are the core migration months in the contiguous United States. [IPaC](#) provides additional detail on bird migration in your area. Ideally searches would occur every day in both the morning and afternoon. However, searches conducted 5-6 times a week can also be effective, regardless of time-of-day.

### Search Methods, Data Collection, and Materials

Observers walk around glass areas (alternating directions on successive days) examining the ground for bird carcasses within two meters of the glass surface. Be aware that injured birds may seek shelter under vegetation or other structures. Observer should also examine the glass for signs of collisions (e.g., powder, feathers, blood).

Recommended materials for every search include:

datasheet, clipboard, pencil, permanent marker, sealable freezer bags, paper bags with paper towel, camera, and bird ID resources. Recommended materials to have nearby in case needed: net, towel, gloves, and boxes.



Dead birds should be stored in sealed freezer bags and with the following data recorded on the bag using permanent marker: date, time, species (if known), location found, weather, and the observer's name. The same information should be recorded on the datasheet. After the search is complete, dead birds should be placed in a freezer or donated to research or museums.

Live birds should be captured and placed in a labeled paper bag lined with a paper towel. Record on the paper bag and on the datasheet: date, time, species (if known, otherwise take photograph, if possible), location found, weather, and the observer's name. Birds that survive collisions with glass often suffer from head trauma, neurological disorders, eye injuries, temporary blindness, and air sac punctures, which can be treated at a licensed wildlife rehabilitation center. Because these symptoms can take more than 24 hours to appear, it is important to take injured birds to a licensed wildlife rehabilitation center as soon as possible. When capturing injured birds approach them behind and pick them up using a net, towel, or

hands. Use caution when capturing large birds and consider wearing gloves and using cardboard boxes for containment. Place American Woodcocks in bags because they often reinjure their heads in boxes. Clip paper bags closed with binder clips or clothespins. Paper bags are breathable material and do not need air holes. Place bags and boxes in a safe location until birds can be transported to the licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Licensed rehabilitators can be found at [National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association](#), [Animal Help Now](#), or your state's website for wildlife response

**Datasheet-** Observers should complete the datasheet including the birds detected or other signs of collision or enter zero when no signs of collision are detected. Be sure to complete the data entry for the time spent monitoring for collisions, as well as any relevant notes, or photos. Data can be entered into our online database (optional).

**Permits-** Your agency should have a Federal Salvage permit when collecting dead birds. Service staff may be covered by their Regional Director's permit. Many states also require a state permit along with your federal permit, so make sure to research your state's requirements. If lacking the needed permits then dead birds can be photographed and buried on site instead of collecting and storing the carcasses. Injured birds should be transferred to a licensed wildlife facility within 24 hours.

### **Interpreting and Using Data**

Carcass searches will likely reveal problem areas with relatively higher numbers of bird collisions. The Service's *Low-cost Methods to Reduce Bird Collisions with Glass* and *Minimizing bird collisions with glass in remodeled and new facilities* provide useful information for treating glass to reduce bird collisions while considering the budget and aesthetic needs of your facility. Public education materials are also available to increase the benefits of your glass treatments.



Your small and inexpensive actions can make a big difference for birds. Start making your difference today! For more information please contact: [Joelle\\_Gehring@FWS.gov](mailto:Joelle_Gehring@FWS.gov) or [Eric\\_Kershner@FWS.gov](mailto:Eric_Kershner@FWS.gov) or visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) and search Glass Bird Collision.